

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MERION CIVIC ASSOCIATION
FEBRUARY 26, 2013

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Merion Civic Association was held on Tuesday, February 26, 2013, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Merion Tribute House with President Scott Kalner presiding.

Directors present were, Browne, Feuer, Flaks, Fratis, Gordon, Greenberg, Kalner, Lam, Murphy, Quinn, Rutzel, and Seiden.

Directors absent and excused were Bagley, Blakeney, Eisenberg, Ettelson, Hill, Lavoritano, Marmon, and Potok.

In addition, about a dozen Merion residents were in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by President Kalner. On motion by Les Greenberg and seconded by Kevin Murphy, the February 2013 minutes were approved unanimously.

President Kalner introduced the first speaker of the evening, Officer Dan Rizzet of the Lower Merion Police Department, for the quarterly update on crime activity in Lower Merion. In general, the trends are down, however motor vehicle thefts are up, specifically in Bala Cynwyd. There were multiple break-ins at Adath Israel as well as day time burglaries. GPS systems from inside vehicles was a big item. Officer Rizzet reminded us to be aware, to lock our houses and cars and report unusual activity.

The second speaker of the evening was Tom Yates of Lower Merion United, a grass-roots community organization formed recently to promote gun reform legislation in the areas of background checks, reduction of ammunition clip sizes, assault weapons ban by contacting state and federal representatives. Lower Merion United is coordinating with other local groups, meetings with the School Superintendent McGinley and Representatives Fattah and Toomey. Lower Merion United is focusing on increasing public awareness and encourages all to contact their elected officials by email.

Treasurer's Report – Dave Rutzel presented the Treasurer's report for January, 2013.

President's Report – President Kalner began his report by discussion his proposed reorganization of the Merion Civic Association Committees by consolidating committees and renaming them with the following stated purposes:

Cultural and Social Programming

Develop and promote cultural programs for the community and for dedicated Board of Director events such as the annual meeting. Maintain relationships and collaborate with the educational institutions in the community such as the local public and private schools, universities and the Barnes Foundations. The Committee organizes the annual Flag Day concert held at the Merion Tribute House

Land Use, Zoning and Community Relations

Monitor proposed land development projects in the community and associated zoning issues. Attend and participate in hearings by the Lower Merion Board of Commissioners, the Lower Merion Planning Commission and the Zoning Hearing Board and various Township planning and legislative workshops. Maintain contact with local media concerning activities and issue of interest to the Civic Association.

Finance

Prepare the yearly budget; recommend investments and changes in holdings; authorize expenditures and oversee financial transactions.

History

Maintain liaison with the Lower Merion Historical Society, Lower Merion Conservancy and the Lower Merion Township Historical Commission and promote history of Merion. The History Committee organizes guided walks and tours around the neighborhood to focus on a particular aspect of Merion's rich heritage. Continue dialogue with neighbors and the Lower Merion Conservancy on the development of an historic architectural district.

Membership

Welcome new residents and promote membership and community participation in the Civic Association.

Newsletter/Website

Publish the biannual newsletter and maintain and update the Civic Association website.

Nominating

Identify and present nominees to the Board of Directors and the Executive Board. The committee is comprised of past presidents of the Civic Association.

Train Station/Post Office and Grounds

Assist in the maintenance and beautification of the Merion train station and surrounding landscape. Maintain liaison with SEPTA, Amtrak and Lower Merion Township. Collaborate with the Merion Botanical Society on the development and maintenance of the park adjacent to the train station.

Streets, Lights and Traffic

Identify and collect information from neighbors on poor street conditions, parking and traffic issues and street light outages for reporting to Township for remedial action.

Ad-Hoc Committees:

Merion Community Coalition/Saint Joseph's University Ad-Hoc Committee

In conjunction with the Merion Community Coalition, meet on a regular basis with representatives of Saint Joseph's University to address issues related to construction and operations on the Maguire Campus and associated external effects on the surrounding community.

Merion Civic Association Centennial Ad-Hoc Committee

Plan for events celebrating and commemorating the centennial of the founding of the Civic Association.

President Kalner requested that all directors advise if they are satisfied with the Committee reorganization and their assignment to the various committees as written in the draft document.

President Kalner reported on activities of the Centennial Committee. Representative Fattah has been invited to be the keynote speaker at the Centennial/Flag Day Concert event. Fundraising events will be held through the year, such as a beer tasting event, a Phillies game, a summer house tour. Sharon Wolfson, Merion resident, is organizing the house tour and her husband, Gary Blum, is creating a Centennial logo and a website dedicated to the events. Volunteers will be needed to help with all of these projects. Another focus of the Centennial is the Merion/Bala Cynwyd business district, which is shared with the Bala Neighborhood Club and the Merion Park Civic Association and the Commissioners representing all three groups. President Kalner is working with Chris Leswing and reaching out to the business owners in the district.

Don Cannon will be attending the March meeting to present plans for landscaping and storm water management along Idris Road. The water management phase of the plan will occur in the spring, and the landscaping in the fall. Two different offices of the Township are involved in developing master plans for the Botanical Park and Idris Road which must tie in with each other so that the water draining from Idris feeds into the park stream on the other side of the tracks.

President Kalner reported on the Comprehensive Plan quarterly meeting of February 21. All the committees reported good progress; the Land Use Committee is still struggling to maintain an overview of their work. The current focus of the Land Use Committee is the institutional portion which is regulated through the special exception process.

The frequency of the committee meetings is slowing to give members time to reflect and write. The Housing Committee is mapping the historical districts, of which there are seven.

Scott Feuer reported on the Botanical Park work. He is representing the Merion Civic Association at the Township meetings regarding the park master plan. Three Botanical members were in attendance along with Scott - Jeff Cepull, Judith Flaks and Brenda Casper. On February 6 there was a meeting with Lindsay Taylor, who is chairing the Township group, which focused on drafting a master plan including trees, flooding, erosion and collaborating with SEPTA and Amtrak. Jeff Cepull is hoping for a lot of community input into the plan as well as the Lower Merion Conservancy which will also be included. Public meetings will be scheduled to get input from Merion residents, one of which will coincide with a Merion Civic Association meeting.

Commissioner — Commissioner Brian Gordon began his report with the storm water project on Idris Road, stating that the maintenance of the plantings is a question that needs to be resolved. The Township would like the neighbors to participate.. The Bala Cynwyd Library will be finished

and ready to open in a few months. Penn Wynne Library plans for redesign were distributed. Commissioner Gordon will be meeting with Alison Nealy of the Lower Merion Conservancy regarding historic district designation in Merion. He reminded us that the Barnes museum is not protected, nor are the historic homes on the St. Joe's campus. Latch's Lane has been canvassed door-to-door. Residents along Raynham Road are opposed.

Regarding the Rockland Avenue bridge opening, the Township is not enthusiastic about the project. Commissioner Gordon stated that neighbors need to attend a Commissioner's meeting to demonstrate their wish to have the bridge fixed and opened.

Federation of Civic Associations – Kevin Murphy that the Federation Meeting took place on February 11 with President Kalner, Frances Quinn and himself attending for Merion Civic. The meeting was well attended by Merion residents as well. The meeting had multiple reports from the Township Comprehensive Plan Committee members. There is considerable concern with the Land Use Committee, which was discussed at length at last month's Civic meeting.

Community Watch – Kevin Murphy announced that the next meeting will take place on Thursday, March 14th. The last meeting was on 1-3-13. The final draft of the bylaws of the LMCW have been revised by Carole Strickland, Steve Freed, Carl Watson and Kevin. A township-wide information campaign will be mailed out later this year to alert the public of LMCW and their duties.

Narberth Fire Company/Union Fire Company – The Narberth Fire Company Board Meeting took place on February 4. Narberth Fire Co responded to 22 total alarms during the month of January. There were 5 alarms in the Borough and 17 in LM. 38 donations came in the amount of \$2,963 which is an average of \$77.97. Narberth had 82 man hours last month including three drills with 39 members responding. Keep in mind that Narberth is a volunteer company and they are not paid a stipend by the Township like the other local fire companies. If you are served by Narberth or Union, please consider giving to their fund drive. The Union Fire Company Board Meeting took place on February 21. In January, Union responded to 36 calls which is a pretty busy month. An average of 3 officers and 8 firemen attend the fire calls. The average fire call is 15 minutes.

Community Action, Zoning & PR – Les Greenberg reported that the lights installed by St. Joe's University along City Avenue in front of York Lynne Manor will be outfitted with shields to screen the condo units from the glare.

The old Wynnewood Post Office is the site of a proposed restaurant. The Wynnewood Civic Association has been lobbying for not outdoor music and for outdoor seating to cease one hour before all closing times. Federal Realty has agreed to these conditions. The other building project, the new Whole Foods, is also being discussed, with Whole Foods being receptive to working with its neighbors in a collaborative spirit.

Les announced that the first development project of The City Avenue District on Righter's Ferry Road in Bala Cynwyd, an 11 story, 284 unit building, is in negotiation. The developer and the Bala Plaza owner have not yet agreed on an access easement, which affects which way the new building would be oriented.

Les made a motion which was seconded and approved, to authorize the Executive Committee to compose a letter of support for the other civic associations in what they think should be done about the Federal Realty issues in Wynnewood.

Old Business – None

New Business – None

There being no more new business, a motion was made and seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held at the Merion Tribute House on Tuesday, March 19, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. in the ballroom.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Guy, Secretary